

Albemarle-Pamlico National Estuary Program

Our mission:

To identify, restore and protect the significant resources of the Albemarle-Pamlico estuarine system.

Our approach:

The Albemarle-Pamlico National Estuary Program pursues its mission with guidance and support from its advisory bodies, regional partners and its ecosystem-based Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan. APNEP's initiatives are guided by input from a diverse group of regional partners and stakeholders. Together, we work to protect and enhance one of the nation's most valuable estuaries.

APNEP's comprehensive approach is designed to preserve the integrity of the entire estuarine ecosystem, with a special emphasis on improving water quality in the region's rivers and sounds.



APNEP was among the first of 28 National Estuary Programs established by the Clean Water Act. APNEP is a cooperative effort jointly supported by the N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation. Financial support is provided by a grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

The Albemarle-Pamlico estuary was designated as "an estuary of national significance" in 1987, and it continues to be recognized as a nationally important resource through its recent designation as one of "America's Great Waters." With more than 3,000 square miles of estuarine waters and a drainage basin of 28,000 square miles, the Albemarle-Pamlico is among the nation's largest and most significant estuarine ecosystems. Due to the mixing of nutrients from

land and sea, estuaries produce more food per acre than even the richest farmland. Estuaries provide habitat for 75 percent of America's commercial fish catch and between 80 and 90 percent of America's recreational fishing catch. In North Carolina, the Albemarle-Pamlico estuary supports billions of dollars of economic activity per year through industries including commercial and recreational fishing, tourism and shipping.

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Recent APNEP Accomplishments

Identify

Since 1987, APNEP has funded or supported more than 100 applied research initiatives designed to improve the working knowledge of the Albemarle-Pamlico estuarine system.

These studies are available at www.apnep.org/research-reports.

Recent studies have evaluated oyster restoration approaches in the sounds, provided insights on rates of wetland habitat loss and catalogued barriers to anadromous fish migration.



Protect

Since 2000, APNEP and its regional partners have protected or restored more than 250,000 acres of land in the Albemarle-Pamlico region. Every acre helps preserve vital terrestrial habitats and natural areas while filtering runoff to the sounds. In areas of strategic importance, APNEP staff, advisory committee members and partners provide expertise and diverse stakeholder perspectives to support the development of sound public policy at the state and local level.



Restore

APNEP routinely supports ecosystem restoration efforts. Several recent hydrological restoration efforts have shown significant water quality improvements on a large scale. Shoreline restoration efforts improve wetland habitats and reduce erosion while demonstrating their value for private and public property protection. New oyster reefs filter millions of gallons of water, provide habitat for saltwater fish and increase the bounty of our coastal fisheries.



Engage

APNEP engages the stakeholders of the Albemarle-Pamlico region on many levels to improve the estuarine ecosystem. APNEP's environmental education initiatives prepare the next generation to address environmental challenges. APNEP also works among states and agencies to facilitate government cooperation at all levels, and the program's advisory structure provides a forum for hundreds of stakeholders and experts to shed light upon estuarine issues. Regional residents can stay current on program developments through various media channels and publications offered by APNEP, including a news feed, routinely published articles and social media.

Monitor

To ensure responsible stewardship of our sounds and the financial resources invested to protect them, APNEP coordinates with its agency partners to monitor and report on indicators of environmental health. The results of these monitoring efforts are compiled in a comprehensive assessment of the Albemarle-Pamlico ecosystem, which allows managers to target resources in areas where they are most needed.

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